What women are wearing

WAISTCOATS THE FAD.

Shrinking Sleeves and Decorated Skirts Are Prominent Features of Fashion—Modish Fabrics for Spring and Summer.

Only a week ago absorbed in Easter novelties, this week dame fashion has turned her attention to summer trappings, and in colors and designs never seen before. The shops are now abounding with her wares.

But if only, only Mrs. Fashion were a shade less rapid!

There is many an old love one would like to cling to and not have a new one thrust upon them; but as long as the world wags as it does, inconstancy in fashion attachments must be the thing.

What will become of the thin-shouldered, scrawny-armed women, one wonders, when tight sleeves shall replace the loose ones?

As yet they are only threatening to come and are in such quaint, insinuating models that one can scarcely resent them. But if the fashion oracles may be believed, before many moons are over sleeves will go back to the old skin-tight principles, which arms needed to look as if they had been melted and poured into cases like sausages, and comfort was unknown.

Then there has lately been a reaction in favor of trimmed skirts, many of the summer designs in thin textiles being most elaborate.

There are organdy, Swiss and dainty muslin skirts, decked almost to the knee with lace-edged flounces and quillings of ribbon.

Many of the mohair skirts in the novelty weaves have the same seams outlined with satin pipings, and there are linen lapes, each gore of which shows from hem to belt elaborate decorations of lace, braid or embroidery. Even the tailor skirts are running much to plain and fancy braid trimmings at the bottom, and though there are skirts in plain and flowered silks and brocaded woods as severely untrimmed as formerly, they haven't the eclat of the latest stamp.

But there are certain trim little waistcoats being worn in conjunction with some of the English tailor gowns that one trusts will, like Tennyson's brook, go on for ever. They are so snug and dapper that they carry with them a sense of extreme neatness, and wash vestings are the materials most used.

Some of these vestings are in bold plaids that have a sporty look, dear to the girl who loves a mannish make-up. Others are in bright red or blue, patterned with tiny stars, diamonds, dots and leaf designs, while a rich cream-white linen damask is as thick as cardboard and has a lustrous satin finish.

In cut and general effect the English waistcoats ape a coquettish masculinity and are provided with the breast and waist pockets of the manly article. They are single or double breasted, and are cut either very high or else quite low, like a man's evening vest. If there are any revers they are usually round and very narrow. With such waistcoats, which, by the way, will be worn later with the linen and duck suits as well as with the tweed, cheviots, serges and mohairs now seen, a stiff linen collar and shirt front and narrow bow tie are correct accompaniments.

Odd bodices made of bandanna and Turkish handkerchiefs are becoming and useful novelties. Many are sold ready made in the shops, the gay borders of the great silk squares forming yokes and sleeve puffs.

The bandanna bodices are short and round, gathered full, and button at the back, where butterfly bows of the bordering finish the neck and waist line. The Turkish affairs are often more elaborate, and with the rich Eastern colors of the handkerchiefs yellow lace or black net will be used over contrasting linings with fine effect.

But think not that such a bodice is for ordinary folk—unless it is made on this side of the water. The imported models are as dear as dear, and to give an idea of what dear means in this case, $150 is the price just now being asked for one in a Broadway shop!

But oh! such a bodice, such a bodice as this was! The coloring in itself would have made any woman pretty; such dim, tender browns and pomegranate reds and yellows, with here and there a high glint of flame and green in the shadows—then suddenly a flash like the sun on golden armor!

With this there were pretty girlish lines, a long slender waist effect with a sour girdling of narrow gilt braid over little flaunting basques.

The long, close sleeves were shirred lengthwise over cords, the short puff at the shoulder bunched high into a butterfly look.

Then there was black brussels net in a V at the front and back of the bodice over orange silk, flirts of the same in the sleeve puffs, and a jeweled throat clasp and belt buckle, such as a sultana might sport. Tout entier this corsage was a love, and the extravagance of its buying could be forgiven any woman. "Fancy it at a Delmonico fork breakfast on a sweet May morning!" sighed one girl as she looked at it. Then mother along said that it would be adorable with a plain black cloth or peau de soie skirt; and they they both sighed again—and went away without it!

Smart Vestings of Wool or Wash Goods the Rage.

In direct contrast to the other splendid colorings of the season are the ecru linens and batistes that are being so extensively used. "Linon batistes" are the thinnest of these linens, and there are some designs showing leaf and flower applications in color that are extremely beautiful. A warp-printed batiste is another novelty and is called "painted linon."

The plain ecru batistes are used for gowns, summer dust cloaks and parasols in every degree of dressiness, and are made up over colored silks which show effectively through insertions of white or cream guipure.

A summer traveling cloak pictured is of unbleached linon, with an openwork band of linen and white guipure, forming a cape and stole arrangement. This is appliqued on stem-green satin ribbon, a thin surah lining throughout the cloak matching in tint.

A Worth costume de plaze shown is also of the plain ecru batiste. Insertions of unbleached guipure, over a lining of peach blossom pink silk, ornament the skirt and bodice of this effectively. A crush band of peach pink velvet finishes the throat and waist line.

The hat with this toilet is a close French walking shape of white chip, widened at the sides with huge clumps of black primroses. A tall pink aigrette takes away the square look so trying to many faces—notwithstanding square hats are the thing—and lifts the left side to approved heights.

The painted linons are rare here by the yard, but one of the best Broadway shops is showing them in dashing suit patterns. A delicate scroll tracery in black is one elegant design in them, and there are some with chini and others with Persian effects. A skirt of painted linon just sent over by Felix for the summer races has a round bodice of kilted black silk muslin. The black warp printed scroll design mentioned covers, in this case, each entire gore of the skirt, which is lined with white silk. A white silk muslin gamp over pink gros grain, a pink kid belt, and a breast-knot of pink and white silk roses are elegant details of the bodice.

Here, so potent are their charming suggestions, one feels a warm desire to talk about the linen parasols as well; one only feels that one must not. Sufficient unto the day are the evils thereof. But one plain ecru batiste parasol, remember, with a silk lining in a soft green, will be a smart and useful addition to a knock-about summer toilet.

FIN DE SIECLE COOK.

A Poor Society Belle Makes Desserts for Her Rich Friends.

"Fancy what a shock I had last week," said vivacious Miss B., who had been visiting in a large Western city; "and yet it was rather nice, you know."

"The people I was stopping with are railroad kings—always travel in a private car, step over to Europe with less effort than New Yorkers make in going to Brooklyn, and all that. Well, the day after my arrival they gave me a tea, and the prettiest girl in the room was a red-haired creature, with a ravishing figure, and a gown which fitted worlds better than mine. I was immensely taken with her, and we chatted, and she was jolly and clever and most fascinating. Finally, as we were drinking tea together, the butler offered me some cake— a blowaway, melt-in-your-mouth concoction of sugar and chocolate utterly delicious.

"I said at once I had never tasted anything so delicate, whereupon the beauty calmly remarked:

"'I am glad you like it; I made it.'

"I thought she was joking.

"'Why, you are not a relative, are you?' I asked.

"'No,' she said, with a little laugh. 'I must have looked bewildered. 'No, I am a professional cook. I make almost all the fancy desserts and cake for the swell set here.' And it was true.

"She belonged to a poor family, good enough as to birth, the father incapable of earning much, and as she grew up it became necessary to do something. She liked cooking, and began with this sugar cake, making it occasionally for a few friends. When I met her she was on the top round, had two rooms at the back of the house, with a telephone, an assistant cook and errand boy, and bought her flour and sugar and things at wholesale.

"The remarkable thing was that she remained the intimate friend of these rich girls with whom she had gone to school, dressed better than a good many of them, and, after making the cakes and creams for a big reception, would dress and go eat her own wares.

"'It used to sound very droll,' she said, 'when my hostess would call through the telephone: "Oh, Betty, dear, can you send me two quarts of biscuit Tortoni for dinner tomorrow night?" and "Betty, if you are going to the dance Friday, I'll take you up in the carriage." But, you know, it seemed rather nice, too.'"

Disillusionized.

"Well," said the duckling, "well."
As he looked at his broken shell.
"If this is the world I've dreamed about
It's a very great pity I ever came out."

"I Saw a Jolly Little Group of New Yorkers Ambling Home From the Bois."

PATTERNS THAT PAY.

How to Study Practical Designing by Correspondence.

It is a mistake to suppose that it requires a wonderful amount of talent or genius to become a successful designer.

Any woman of average intelligence can master easily the fundamental rules and principles, and if patient and painstaking may become, in time a designer, and thereby earn her daily bread and butter. Of course, some pupils are more apt than others, and during their first year of instruction are able to sell their designs to carpet or wall-paper manufacturers. Designs sell for $5, $8 or $10, and if one is fortunate enough to get a position as designer or colorist in a factory, the salary is from $10 to $15, $25 or $30 a week.

Furthermore, a demand exists for patterns which cannot be filled by the designers already at work in this country. All the big manufacturers send abroad for hundreds or for thousands of dollars' worth of patterns yearly, and many of the designs cannot be woven or printed just as they are received. For example, a wall-paper manufacturer seldom gets a pattern that exactly fits his own machinery, and frequently they are taken from silk, chintz, cretonne, bits of carpet—anything that will give an idea to the maker. After reaching this country they must be adapted. Sometimes a flower is taken from a piece of chintz; a geometrical figure from wall-paper, etc., and combined to make a pleasing whole.

These designs could be made quite as well in our own land and by women. Such a thing as a practical working pattern made by a woman was unknown here less than twenty years ago, and although many women have become successful designers since then, it is said by an authority on the subject that several thousand more should find employment in this profession.

One of the beauties of learning the art is that it can be successfully acquired by correspondence.

The School of Industrial Art, in New York, founded by Mrs. Cary, instructs many hundred of women yearly, 600 say, of which perhaps eighty are learning the art of designing by letter. One ambitious Japanese boy is a pupil. He can write English, fortunately, and is becoming quite expert—as the designs he submits show. He is a patient youth, too, for the letters exchanged between pupil and teacher are a month en route. Instruction is also given by letter to women in the Sandwich Islands, in the West Indies, in Canada and nearly every State in the Union.

The designs are for wall paper, rugs, carpets, oil cloths, lace, silk, window shades, stained glass, calico, and prints, portieres, linen, Easter and Christmas cards, furniture, book covers, fan mounts, and so on ad infinitum. "Time fails me," one enthusiastic designer declares, "to design the different things I can think of to do."

One is never too old to learn his art; indeed, a "grandmother" is doing successful work as a designer and earning $25 a week.

Perhaps a description of the method of instruction for beginners may be of interest.

First, the pupil is taught to judge of distances by making lines of certain length and judging the length by her eye.

"Draw the line three inches long" is perhaps the instruction given by the professor. Nothing is copied; everything is drawn either from the mind or from the object.

The pupil draws the line. Probably not one in the whole school will make it just three inches long. After it is drawn they test it, find out whether the lines are too long or too short, what the difference is, and draw another, which probably more nearly approximates the proper size. They are told to draw a three-inch square; next, to draw its diagonals and diameters; to bisect the sides; to draw lines from the points of bisection, either diagonal, vertical, or horizontal.

Painted Linon.

Black and White Silk.

So they go on, under dictation, from step to step, until the first thing they know they have a design. It may be a chair, a goblet, or just a haphazard pattern that would do for a tile. This gives the pupils the idea of laying out a design systematically and geometrically.

They are then told to make a design themselves in the same way; to draw a square, circle, triangle, or any geometrical figure; to divide it with any subdivisions they like, and to connect these points by lines, either curved or straight, and see what the result will be; before they know it, they have made a working pattern.

Floral forms, taken from nature, are next attempted. The flower is resolved into its elements; that is, it is drawn front view, back view, front and back of leaf, the roots, every part of the flower; then one petal is drawn and colored, or a stamen or the pistil; the flower is cut in two to see what geometrical figure it forms, every flower and every part being based on some geometrical figure—it may be oval, triangular or elliptical. In this way from one flower twenty to thirty different forms are made.

When these elements are combined the design will be pure. If a design is made from a rose, there will be nothing but rose elements introduced, maybe the seed-pod, the thorns, the full blossom. After this instruction the young designer never makes the mistake of putting ivy leaves or spring flowers with those that bloom in the fall.

The technicalities of machinery are next taught, so that by the time the young woman graduates from the school at the end of two years, she knows not only how to design ingrain carpets, but she understands thoroughly all about every technical part of every kind of fabric or article for which designs are made.

TWO BITS OF FANCY WORK.

A convenient contrivance to hold embroidery scissors at one's side is made like the accompanying illustration. One yard and a half of ribbon somewhat less than an inch wide, about two dozen of the brass rings, a safety pin and a patent hook are all the necessary materials. Finish the top with a bow, under which is sewed the pin as indicated by the sketch, for a fastening to the belt, run the ribbon through the rings, crossing them, and putting the ribbon in the space between; sew the hook on the lower end, slip through the handles of the scissors, bring it back and fasten it to the next lowest ring on the under side. If desired the rings may be crocheted with silk to match the ribbon, and the more rings used the firmer will be the holder. Some scissors are always disappearing, but with this attachment they are always at hand.

Prepare four pieces of cardboard, 2 1-2 x8 1-2 inches, cover two with fine white and two with buttercup yellow satin. On one linen paint a spray of buttercups and grasses and add the suggestive lines in dainty lettering. Leave the other linen plain. Take bands of narrow yellow satin ribbon about one-half inch wide and, laying the plain linen back on the table with the unfinished side up, paste the ribbons to its edge, leaving about three inches extending to the left side, in like manner paste to the inner side of one of the satin covered pieces other ribbons so slanting as to cross each other extending to the right side.

Now lay the reverse pieces on each turning under the ribbons at the edges, pasting the parts together, and when complete you will find you have a set of hinges which will work either way.

A Bachelor's Growl at the Women.

Oh, the beautiful woman, the woman of ancient days,
The ripe and the red, who are done and dead,
With never a word of praise;
The rich, round Sallies and Susans, the Pollies and Joans and Prues,
Who guarded their fame and saw no shame
In walking in low-heeled shoes.

They never shrieked on a platform, they never desired a vote;
They sat in a row and liked things slow,
While they knitted or patched a coat.
They lived with nothing at Latin, and a jolly slight less of Greek,
And made up their books and changed their cooks
On an average once a week.

They never ventured in hansoms, nor climbed to the topmost 'bus,
Nor talked with a twang in the latest slang;
They left these fashions to us.
But, ah, she was sweet and pleasant, though possibly not well read;
The excellent wife who cheered your life,
And vanished at ten to bed.

And it's oh, the pity, the pity that time should ever annul,
The wearers of skirts who mended shirts
And never thought nurseries dull.
For everything's topsy-turvy now; the men are bedded at ten,
While the women sit up and smoke and sup,
In the Club of the Chickless Hen.
—Punch.

FASHIONS FOR TOTS.

This Summer's Boy Will Dress in Crash and Gingham.

Paris Modistes Say American Mothers Order Child's Clothes of Them Because More Sensible—Toweling for Street Play.

(Copyright, 1896.)

This weather brings them out in swarms in the Bois and the Luxembourg gardens, "the sunshine babies," as they are called. For there are other babies in Paris, too—the "rain or shine babies." But they are so different, so roly-poly and red-cheeked, and they defy all sorts of weather.

And then one could never write a letter about the different styles of their dresses, for there is but one style of dress known to the "rain or shine babies"—a sort of "smock" of blue linen or black alpaca, a full affair, gathered on to a short yoke. It reaches a little below the knees, and at the waist there is always a little yellow leather belt. Then there is a little expanse of chubby legs, generally clad in bright purple worsted stockings, and the daintiest shoes one could imagine of thick calfskin with wooden soles.

Except on holidays these "rain or shine babies" never get to the Bois or the Luxembourg gardens for their airings, but there is always an alluring sand-heap near by that the builders have dumped for their mortar-making, and the babies for blocks around claim it.

Dejeuner comes all too soon, and little "rain or shine baby" is called for its noon meal. A big earthen mug of red wine and water is gulped down at the shop door. All the while baby's eyes roll round the edge of the mug watching the interesting sand heap and the jolly French poodle.

With a last little gulp and a pant, and eyes all swimming over with choke-tears, "rain or shine baby" hands back the mug and gets a great piece of dry bread as big as its head, and with a hurried "Merci, maman," baby is off again to the sand heap.

I can't believe that either baby or the mother knows of that vast army of people who continually wage war on that one article of food that's in the bill of fare regularly twice a day, for baby's cheeks could not blacken as they invariably do, and baby's head could not be so light if it knew of the future painted so black as this great army that does not approve of wine for children paints it.

When the spring comes the "sunshine babies" have to play very furiously and think very deep to make up for the long winter months spent indoors—months when the sun doesn't shine one week out of the four.

Every baby has its own nurse and the nurses—who have styles of their own—group themselves around in the parks in little bunches, according to their nationality.

There will be a group of Alsatian caps, with their heads all together, all talking at the same time, but their fingers are always busy with their knitting needles, and not far off another group in Breton caps having quite as sociable a morning. So the little groups of children are divided up this way, irrespective of their divers languages and nationalities.

The American and English children are in the majority, but there are lots of French and Italian and Spanish in the groups, all of them catching unconsciously the French language to quickly answer properly.

A handsome little fellow, who wears always kilts of white duck, has a new spring overcoat of cadet-blue ladies' cloth, tailor-made, and very plain, with a short cape and a dark blue-yellow collar. This child speaks three languages.

I saw a jolly little group of New Yorkers ambling home yesterday from the "Bois." Little Miss "Ten Months" was in the lead, in a little white coat of Turkish toweling and one of those great fluffy bewitching caps of white muli, with little clumps of moss roses tucked about in the frills.

She was kept in check by a practical sort of contrivance—a white suede belt, all padded with blue satin, that was slipped around just under her arms, and decorated with silver "jingle bells." There was a street reins of plaited white leather that was attached on each side of the belt, and with very little trouble nurse supported this ambitious tot.

The other little girl in the group wore a dress of old rose and cream chale, with a broad belt of old rose and taffeta and a collar of old English lace. The boy of the party had on the prettiest little bright dress of Scotch plaid gingham made on the bias. The big sailor collar and the broad belt were of white duck. His broad-brimmed blue sailor hat had a band of bright tartan. I thought him the type of the future athlete and later the statesman.

The very small daughter of a Russian diplomat is fitted out entirely in white. Even the top of her carriage is of white morocco, and there really isn't the slightest suggestion of color to be seen except the bright blue of her eyes and the bright pink of her cheeks.

Many children's gowns are made in Paris for the reason that they are more common-sense here. American mothers would never consent to robe their bright young children, heiresses and heirs of immense fortunes, in materials so plain, for example, as Turkish toweling. Yet if the towel dresses come from Paris it is different!

I saw a little group of these were American children, directly from the States, playing in a Paris gutter. The little ones had wandered outside the small park where they were sent for the morning, and had gathered like little street urchins around a small pile of dirt in which there were inviting twigs and lumps of dirt. They played an hour before discovered, and when called from their enchanting pastime by their nurses they arose from the ground, shook themselves and toddled into the park none the worse for wear. They were dressed in little coats of brownish toweling, with red ribbons at throat, and a tiny red bunching around the hem inside the cloak. In this delightfully comfortable garb they played all day.

Our own children at home seldom wear "wash" cloaks, but the babies of Paris wear them constantly. Two or even three cloaks a week are worn by them, and a little child in a soiled silk robe would be looked down upon by other children and pitied by the elders as one who had no cloak at all.

A whole stack of little coats, in toweling, and in the denims and oilcloth, and other rough and ready materials were stacked together to go to the United States. They were exquisitely made, and were trimmed with most delightful trimmings of silk and lace, but no velvet. They were all intended for one family of children. I also saw some very cunning and useful coats which were to go, I was told, to the Hammersley family. They were, doubtless, for that wonderful little $7,000,000 baby, who is as well known here as at home, on account of his connection with Lady William Beresford.

White is immensely worn here by children, but it is coarse, easily laundered, comfortable white, devoid of the straightness and starchiness of those miserable cambrics.

And the nou-nou, too, is chief all in white from the top of her high Swiss cap to the broad soles of her shoes. Another important baby is the wee son of an East Indian high official. What his skin lacks in whiteness is made up to this high-born baby in the pure whiteness of his robes.

The most elegant long coat of white silk, trimmed profusely in rich old lace, was his. He was borne along by the proudest white nurse and he blinked just as contentedly at the sun in spite of the stage whispers that went around among the small boys, dubbing him "le petit cafe au lait."

Yesterday I went to see a very newcomer in Paris, one who has not been initiated in an out-of-door life, and one who has yet to look forward to his first walk in the "Bois." Edith, of six, and Bobbie, just two, came to tell me all about the personal appearance of their new brother. Edith said the pretty dress she wore was even newer than the baby, for it had just come that day.

It was of green batiste, with a little figure in old blue. The square yoke was of plain green batiste, and the trimming was coarse ecru lace inserting. She wore with it a belt of old blue velvet with two rosettes at the front.

Bob's little dresses are always built on the same general plan, and have the idea of comfort, remarkably preserved. Both are fashionable little folks.

There are very soft fluffy white dresses with a great deal of narrow valenciennes insertions and tiny tucks; and they are all made by the sisters in some Parisian convent that are noted for their dainty needlework.

Then I had the rare treat of seeing baby and his "layette" and even his christening dress. The square yoke of the dress was of narrow lace and fine tucks. The full pointed bertha was made of tiny strips of the soft white material and strips of lace. For twenty inches around the bottom of the dress there were bands of the material and bands of the lace decreasing in width as they went up.

Some very full rosettes of white baby ribbon were tacked around on the yoke.

NINA GOODWIN.

Dr. Mary Walker's Idea.

Dr. Mary Walker, who forty years ago preached the gospel of dress reform to the women of this country, and who was arrested in many cities for dressing and appearing in public in male attire, is the apostle of a scheme for the bloomer girls.

Through Lawyer Henry C. Benedict of Oswego, N. Y., Dr. Mary has bought a farm containing 135 acres of land seven miles west of that city, and proposes to form a colony in which man shall have no part. Only females who will bind themselves to a life of celibacy while members of the community and to wear bloomers for life are to be eligible.

They will work the farm in all its details, plant and harvest the crops, dispose of them in market, and take care of the stock. She has drawn up an elaborate plan as to the manner of conducting the farm.

A Unique Profession.

Mrs. Louise Ordway Tead holds a position unique among women. Her study is to superintend the pictures produced by the Providence Lithograph Company for its Sunday-school productions, and she brings to the work both natural, artistic bent and training as a designer. Each picture passes under her eye before it is lithographed, and is criticised until perfection is reached. The books, tracts, and the like are in use all over the world.

Traveling Coat and Tailor Gown.

Elbow Puffs.